

# Care Gram

## Atrial Fibrillation

### What Is Atrial Fibrillation (AFib)?

Normally, your heart squeezes and relaxes pumping blood to a regular beat. This is all caused by electrical impulses in your heart.

When you have atrial fibrillation (AF or AFib), the upper chambers do not beat the way they should. Instead of regular beats, your heart beats too fast or quivers like a bowl of gelatin. This can cause a lack of oxygen to your body, causing you to feel weak, dizzy, and faint.

AFib increases your risk for stroke. Treatment is needed to control the heart rate and help relieve the symptoms.

### AFib can cause you to feel:

- Fast thumping inside the chest
- Short of breath
- Lightheaded or dizzy
- Like you are going to pass out
- Tired or weak
- Chest pain



To find out if you have AFib, your doctor may listen to your heartbeat. He or she also may order tests which record your heartbeat or take special pictures of your heart.



**Licking Memorial  
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1616-0653  
01/26/2017  
Page 1 of 2

**How Is AFib Treated?**

1. Your doctor may order medicine to reduce your heartbeat and rate.
2. Blood thinners may be ordered to reduce your risk for stroke.
3. Electric shock may be used to return your heartbeat to normal.

If you need help paying for your medicines, please contact Jane Melin at (220) 564-4628. We have a Prescription Assistance Program at Licking Memorial Hospital.

**Call your doctor if you:**

- Feel lightheaded, dizzy, or faint
- Have skipped heartbeats
- Have a “fluttering” or pounding feeling in the chest
- Have chest pain or pressure
- Cannot catch your breath
- Feel tired

**Go to the Emergency Department right away, if you cannot reach your doctor.**